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THE
TRAVELS
OF A
PHILOSOPHER.
BEING
OBSERVATIONS
ON THE
CUSTOMS, MANNERS, ARTS,
AGRICULTURE, AND TRADE
OF
SEVERAL NATIONS
IN
ASIA AND AFRICA.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH
OF M. LE POIVRE.

I WANDER O'ER THE VARIOUS RURAL TOIL,
TO KNOW THE NATURE OF EACH DIFFERENT SOIL.
GAY.

L O N D O N:
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T H E
T R A V E L S
O F A
P H I L O S O P H E R.

HERE is not a nation in the
T universe, how barbarous and
unpolished soever it may be,
but what has some arts peculiar to it-
self. If the wants of mankind are va-
ried by different climates, there are al-
so various productions which offer to ex-
ercise their industry upon. One nati-
on has inventions so peculiar to itself,

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that they could not have been the inventions of another: but the chief art of men, in every region, is agriculture: the most barbarous nations, as well as those who have civilized ideas, from one end of the world to the other, partly support themselves by cultivating their lands; yet, however common it may be, it does not flourish the same in every place.

AMONG a judicious people, who know how to encourage and honour it, it always succeeds; with a people who are but half civilized, and who either prefer arts of no manner of use, or, perhaps, being enlightened enough to see the utility of it, are too much overcome by the prejudices of their former barbarity to affranchise and honour those who exercise it, it is but weakly sup-

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forced to retract this first idea, conceived merely by observing the state of agriculture amongst the different people I have been with: the knowledge of various particulars, which I have been able to acquire by a long continuance amongst many of them, has always confirmed me in opinion, that a country which is not well cultivated, is always inhabited by men, savage or enslaved, and that it can never be very populous.

By the detail I now give you of my enquiries, you will observe, that in all countries agriculture solely depends on the laws, the customs, and even on the established prejudices of the respective inhabitants. Some parts of Africa shall take up the first of my observations.

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THE WESTERN COASTS OF AFRICA.

THE most part of the islands and western districts of this part of the universe which I have observed are uncultivated, inhabited by miserable savages. These wretched men, who esteem themselves so little as to sell one another, never think on the cultivation of their lands. Content with existing from one day to another under a climate where they have but few wants, they cultivate no more than prevents their dying of hunger; they carelessly sow some maize yearly, with a small quantity of rice, and plant a few potatoes of various sorts, not of the nature of ours, though they are cultivated much in the same manner; they are known to us by the name of

ported; and amongst barbarians, by whom it is despised, its influence can hardly be perceived, and declines.

AMONG the different nations I have been in on my travels, I have made agriculture the principal object of my attention. A traveller, who only passes through a kingdom, can never make such observations as are necessary to give a just idea of the inhabitants, their customs, manners, laws and government. To observe the public markets and the face of the country, marks the internal state of the empire best in such a case. If there are plenty of provisions in the markets, if the lands are well tilled, and laden with plentiful crops, then you may generally conclude, that the place is populous, and inhabited by people who are civilized and happy, have polished manners,

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and a government which agrees with rational principles. You may then say within yourself, I am now among men, but not barbarians.

ON the other hand, when I have come amongst a people who were to be found no where but amidst forests, whose desolated fields were all grown over with thorns and briers; when I have passed over vast tracts of deserts which lay uncultivated, and then at length stumbled on a poor cultivated field; when come at last at some canton, I have seen nothing in the chief market but a few bad roots, I hesitated no longer to imagine the inhabitants to be miserable savages, or oppressed by a slavery the most wretched.

I HAVE never so much as once been

YAMS. Their harvests are commonly so poor, that the Europeans, who go to them to buy slaves, are forced to carry the provisions necessary for the maintenance of those miserable objects doomed to compose their cargoes, from Europe or America.

THE savages by whom the borders of the European colonies are inhabited, give somewhat more attention to agriculture than the rest. They raise up flocks; they cultivate rice in larger quantities; and pulse are to be got in their gardens, the seed of which has been transported from Europe; yet all they know of agriculture, they have learnt from the Europeans settled amongst them; their own experience is vastly bounded; and I could never dis-

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cover in their industry any process which could improve our own in the least.

You can see nothing but barren uncultivated lands all the way from the river of Angola to Cape Negroe, and from thence till you come near the Cape of Good Hope, the coasts are naked, and covered with barren sands; and you must travel many leagues before you can observe a palm-tree, or the smallest piece of grass. The country and its few inhabitants seem to be struck with one general curse. From the informations I have received with regard to these countries from the Italian missionaries, who have penetrated into the middle of this wretched place with a surprising zeal, I learn likewise, that agriculture is just as little taken notice of in the interior parts as upon the coasts,

although the soil appeared much more fruitful from its natural productions in several places.

THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE.

BEFORE the Dutch took possession of the countries round the Cape, they were as barren ; but since they have been established on this point of Africa, the lands produce wheat and grain of every kind abundantly, wine of various sorts, and a large quantity of very good fruits, collected from all parts. There you see large fields covered with black cattle, horses, and sheep, which thrive very well. The plenty which this colony enjoys, compared to the barrenness of the countries which surround it, plainly shews, that the earth denies her favours to none but the tyrant and the

slave: but becomes lavish of her treasures, beyond the greatest expectation, so soon as she is free, and cultivated by wise men, protected by good and unchangeable laws.

SOME Frenchmen, obliged to leave their country by the revocation of the edict of Nantz, have found a new establishment on this coast, and security, property, and liberty with it, which are the sole real encouragers of agriculture, the sole principles of plenty. They have made this adopted mother rich by their industry; they have founded considerable colonies there, some of which are called by the name of that unhappy country which denied them the use of water and of fire, which however they still fondly remember.

THE industry of the inhabitants, and the fertility of the lands which belong to the colony of Little Rochelle, makes it surpass all the rest. The pastures are there composed of a diversity of grasses, natives of the country, together with several other kinds of herbage, which compose our artificial fields in Europe, such as trefoil, saintfoin, and lucerne. The exotic plants, whose seeds have been imported by the Dutch, there flourish as the natural productions of the country. Those seeds are sown by an operation of the plough; they cut the grass only the first year; the second they put cattle into the meadows, which live there at discretion, minding them no farther than to collect them together every night into a park inclosed with strong and high pallisades, to secure them from the lions and tigers,

which are very plenty in this country.

THEY commonly endeavour to chuse these enclosures near to some brook, where they dig convenient watering places, though some of them are watered only by the rains. In all these pasturages, they have an eye to groves of trees, where the herds and flocks may shelter themselves against the scorching heat of the sun; particularly in January, February, and March, which are the most sultry months in the year in these regions.

THEY labour the arable land sometimes with horses, as in Europe, but for the most part with oxen: the natural sluggishness of these latter animals have been industriously corrected by the

Dutch of this colony, by exercising them while young in a brisk pace; in consequence of which I have seen carriages drawn by teams of ten or a dozen yoke of oxen, at the Cape, go as expeditiously as if they were drawn by horses.

WHEAT, Turkey corn, and rice, are the grains for the most part sown at the Cape; these commonly produce an increase of fifty-fold. They cultivate various kinds of pulse, such as pease, common beans, and French beans. This pulse makes a refreshing provision to the ships which touch at the Cape going to or coming from India.

THERE is a sort of this pulse much in request in India, to which they export a large quantity; they here call

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it **CAPE PEASE**: it is a kind of French bean, which needs no prop; its grain is of the shape of that bean, but larger and more flat; it tastes like our green pease, and preserves its freshness for a considerable time. I have tried the culture of this plant this year, which promises success. The climate at the Cape seems to demand an attention which appears not so necessary in this country from the cultivator, and which would even perhaps be prejudicial to what our lands produce.

For the most part of the year the Cape is exposed to severe hurricanes, which commonly blow from the north-east. These winds are so violent, that they would beat down the fruits from the trees, and destroy the labours of the farmer, had they not provided a barri-

er to secure the harvest. The Dutch colonists have divided their lands into little fields, which they have enclosed with high pallisades of oaks and other trees, set very near each other, somewhat like a charmillé, designed to beautify a garden. They cut them every year, as they grow; they being generally from twenty-five to thirty feet high; in short, every separate field is enclosed like a chamber.

THE Dutch have made this colony not only the granary of all their settlements in the East-Indies, but the most convenient place for vessels to touch at for all sorts of refreshments and provisions, by their industry.

THE Dutch endeavoured to get plants from those cantons which were

the most in repute for their vines, when they began to form their vineyards; but after many fruitless attempts to produce the wines of Burgundy and Champagne at the farthest part of Africa, they applied to rearing the plants brought from Spain, the Canaries, and the Levant, where the climate is more like that of the Cape. At present the plants which are cultivated with the greatest success are those of the muscadel kind; the red muscadel particularly, which they rear in a small district called Constance, produces most excellent wine; the Dutch East-India Company always secure this vintage, which they make presents of to the kings of Europe.

THE wines at the Cape are labour-
ed much in the same manner as at

France, and cultivated without vine-props. The vineyards are environed by a number of trees, upon which they entwine the slips of the large Spanish muscadine, in form of espaliers, very high, by which the strong gales of wind can do no damage to the vines.

At the Cape they regard gardening as much as the other branches of agriculture. You there find all sorts of European pulse, greens, herbs, and roots, with the best of those peculiar to other parts of the universe. Independent of the gardens of the colonists, which are kept in as good order as any in Europe, the India Company have made two or three large and beautiful gardens be laid out, which they sup-

port with an expence worthy of a foreign company.

THERE are fifteen or twenty European gardeners employed in the cultivation of each of these large gardens, under the direction of a chief gardener, whose place is advantageous and honourable. All the experiments that are made in these gardens, in every new species of culture, is at the company's expence; and it is there that every private individual is provided with such plants and seeds as he may have occasion for, without any expence, together with the necessary instructions for their cultivation. These gardens furnish herbage and fruits of various kinds to the ships of the company, in great plenty.

rich: there are large tracts of tilled ground, covered with grass of a prodigious size, which grows five or six feet high in several of the cantons, and is called *FATAK* by the natives; it is very good for nourishing and fattening their black cattle, which are of the largest kind, and are not of the same shape as ours, particularly by a large fleshy protuberance on their neck. Another grass, of a finer blade, shoots freely through the sands on the sea shore, which furnishes food for the sheep: these are of the same kind with those of Barbary, and are most surprisingly different from ours, by the great size of their tails, which commonly are from six to eight pounds in weight.

THE inhabitants of this island, who are called *Malegaches* generally cultivate no other grain but rice: they sow at the

beginning of the rainy season ; by which they are not under the necessity of watering their fields. In tilling their lands they make use of no other instrument but the pick-axe ; they begin by digging up all the weeds ; then five or six men, ranking themselves in a line on the field, make small holes as they go along, into which the women or children, who follow, cast the grains of the rice, and then with their feet cover them with earth : a field sown in this manner brings forth an increase of above eighty or a hundred-fold, which proves rather the great fruitfulness of the soil, than the goodness of the cultivation. The inhabitants of Madagascar live in plenty, how badly soever agriculture may be understood there. Rice and other essential provisions are so cheap in no place that I have been at as in this island. The Male-

TRAVELLERS cannot observe large enclosures appointed to the study and improvement of botany, in which the most rare and useful plants, from all parts of the universe, are arranged in the most excellent order, without astonishment and delight: the curious have the additional satisfaction also of finding skilful gardeners, who delight themselves with describing and shewing their virtues.

EXTENSIVE orchards bound those beautiful gardens, where all the fruits of Europe are to be found, together with several natives of Africa and Asia. Nothing is more pleasing than to see, in different positions, the chesnut, the apple, and other trees, from the most northern climates, in the same enclosure, together with the muscadine of the In-

dies, the camphires of Borneo, the palms, and a diversity of other trees, which originally belong to the torrid zone.

MADAGASCAR.

AFTER you have passed the Cape of Good Hope, you enter the Indian sea, where you find the great island of Madagascar: there are several places in this island which we as yet know not, though the Portuguese, Dutch, French, and other Europeans have had settlements, and frequented it, more than two hundred years. Those parts which are known to us are very fertile, and the inhabitants would cultivate them very well, in all probability, were there a vent for their productions. They rear numerous flocks of cattle and sheep; their fields, such as nature has formed them, are

gaches give two or three measures of rice for a remnant of coarse cloath, of about twenty pence value. The Europeans furnish these measures, who never fail to make them larger every year; yet the islanders do not complain. The measure is first of all heaped; the buyer then, in virtue of a fixed right for securing good measure, thrusts his arm to the elbow in the rice, and with one sweep almost empties it, which the Malegache has the patience a second time to fill, without the least complaint. They call this measure a *GAMELLE*, which will hold about one hundred and sixty pounds of pure rice, when filled in this manner.

If the French India Company, who are the sole possessors of the trade with the natives of this island, would encou-

rage agriculture properly, it would doubtless, make a rapid progress in a short time. Our islands of Bourbon and France would always find here a certain resource against those dearths which very often distress the latter of these islands. Our squadrons bound for India, who touch at the Isle of France for refreshments, would always find plenty of provisions brought there from Madagascar, and consequently would not be under the necessity of spending their time at the Cape, or at Batavia, begging refreshments from the Dutch, whilst the enemies of France are subduing their settlements, and spoiling their trade, as in the late war.

WHEAT would grow as abundantly as rice in Madagascar: it was formerly cultivated with success in the settlement which we then possessed at the southern

point of the island, named Fort Dauphin. Fine stalks of wheat are still to be found there, even till this time, produced from the scattered grains of the old crops, which being blown about by the winds, have sown themselves every year, since our being expelled from that settlement, and sprung up promiscuously, amongst the native herbs of the country. The lands there are extremely fruitful; the islanders wise and ingenious. In those districts into which the Arabs have not penetrated, they are guided by nature's plain laws; their customs are like those of the primitive ages. These laws, and these manners, are more favourable for agriculture, than all our sublime speculations, and our most applauded theories on the most approved practice; than all those ineffectual means now made use of to re-animate an art, which our manners

teach us to look upon with contempt, or treat with levity; and which is continually oppressed, and perplexed by numberless abuses, which spring from the very laws themselves.

THE ISLE OF BOURBON.

THE two isles of Bourbon and France, whose soil is naturally as fertile as that of Madagascar, whilst they enjoy a more happy climate, lie about two hundred leagues eastward of Madagascar. There is no port at Bourbon; which consequently makes it be little frequented by ships. The inhabitants have preserved their simplicity of manners, and agriculture flourishes there. The island produces wheat, rice and maize, not only for its own consumption, but even furnishes a small sup-

ply to the Isle of France: the culture there is the same as at Madagascar. The horned cattle and sheep, which they have imported from that island, thrive here very well, especially as they have likewise introduced the grass named FATAK, which makes very good pasturage, as I have already remarked.

MOST part of the lands of this island are employed in the cultivation of the coffee-tree. The first plants of this shrubby tree were brought from Mocha. It multiplies by its grains sowing spontaneously; it requires little attention; nothing more is necessary than to grub up, three or four times during the first year, the neighbouring weeds, which would otherwise deprive it of its proper nourishment: it grows without care the second year; its branches, which extend

horizontally along the surface of the ground, by their shade stifle the growth of all such weeds, as might shoot up within their circumference: the coffee-tree begins to carry fruit at the end of eighteen months, and in three years yields a plentiful crop. They plant these trees chequer-wise, at about seven feet distance from one another, and, when they grow too tall, prune them to the height of perhaps two feet from the earth.

A LIGHT soil is requisite for the coffee-tree: it thrives better in sand almost pure, than in rich ground: it is observed in the Isle of Bourbon, that these trees yield one with another, about a pound of coffee every year: this fruit comes to perfection, and is got in during dry weather, which makes it far better than the West India coffee, which never ri-

pens, nor is gathered but in rainy seasons. The coffee must be dried, after it is gathered-in, it is therefore laid out to the sun for several days, till the bean becomes quite dry: then they put it in large wooden troughs, and with pestles clear it of the pulp.

THE ISLAND OF FRANCE.

THERE are two very good harbours in this isle, where all the shipping of the French Company put in for refreshments, who are employed in the trade of China and the Indies; here their fleets also rendezvous in times of war; which makes this island not so solitary as Bourbon. The politics and customs of Europe have more influence. The lands are as fruitful as those of

Bourbon; rivulets, which continually run, water it like a garden: notwithstanding which the harvests often fail, and they most always feel a great scarcity here.

SINCE the famous M. de la Bourdonnois's time (who governed this island for ten or twelve years, and ought to be looked upon as the founder of the colony, for his introduction and patronage of agriculture) they have wandered from project to project continually, attempting the culture of almost every kind of plants, without prosecuting any of them properly. The coffee, the cotton, the indigo, the sugar-cane, the pear, the cinnamon, the mulberry, the tea, and the cocoa trees, have all been cultivated by experiments, but so superficially, that they could never succeed.

Had they followed the founder's plain plan, which was to secure bread, the island would have been flourishing at present; plenty would then have reigned amongst the colonists, and the shipping never been disappointed of the necessary refreshments and provisions.

NEVERTHELESS, the cultivation of grain, though badly understood, and not regarded, is the thing that succeeds the best. Those lands, which are so employed, yield a crop of wheat every year, and another of rice or Turkey corn, without having a fallow year between, and without the least improvement, or any other fashion of labour, than what the Malegaches practise.

M. DE la Bourdonnois was the first

who brought the MANIAC into this island: the culture of this plant was at first very difficult, but is now the chief resource of the colonists for the nourishment of their slaves. As the culture of this root is the same in this place as in America, I shall not recount what several other travellers have related.

FORMERLY they transported horned cattle and sheep from Madagascar; but since they have found that it was more advantageous to transport slaves, they have neglected the increase of their cattle, which are daily diminished by the continual demands of the shipping, and the wants of the inhabitants at the same time: besides, they have never hitherto formed any pastures; such as they have attempted having been so unskill-

fully laid out, that they have not succeeded. The island produces, in different cantons, naturally, an excellent kind of grass, which grows five or six feet high. This grass begins to appear above ground when the rainy season commences; it performs all its vegetation during the three months which this season lasts: the inhabitants take advantage of this to pasture their herds, who fatten surprisingly upon it; but there remains nothing on the ground but a straw too hard to afford nourishment to the cattle, when the vegetation is over; and, soon after, the fire, which is kindled here by a thousand accidents, consumes this straw, and with it often part of the neighbouring forests. During the remainder of the year, the herds languish, and stray about amongst the forests.

THE method of taking the woods off the lands by fire, without leaving proper distances between the groves and thickets, is the greatest fault which has been committed in this island, and which has proved most prejudicial to cultivation. The rains, in this island, conduce most to the amelioration of the ground; but the clouds being stop't by the forests, the rains fall there; whilst scarce a single drop falls upon the cleared lands: the fields, at the same time, being thus deprived of defence, are exposed to the violence of the winds, which frequently destroy the harvests. The Dutch found no trees at the Cape, as has been before remarked; but they have planted them there, in order to shelter their habitations. On the contrary, the Isle of France was covered

with woods, and they have been quite rooted up by the colonists.

THE COAST OF COROMANDEL.

IN the East-Indies agriculture has always flourished; however, since the conquest of this country by the Moguls, it has degenerated; who, like all barbarous nations, have despised that industry which nourishes mankind, to attach themselves to that destructive art which lays waste the whole world.

WHEN the conquerors took possession of the country, they appropriated to themselves at the same time all the lands. The Mogul emperors divided them into great moveable fiefs, which they distributed amongst their grandees; these

farmed them out to their vassals; and those again to others; so that now only the servants and day-labourers of the sub-farmers cultivate the fields.

As no country in the universe is more exposed to revolution than the Indies, subjected to masters whose government is an absolute anarchy, the possessor of the fief, as well as the farmer, for ever uncertain of their fate, endeavour to make the most of the lands and their cultivators, without ever thinking in the least on improvement. Fortunately for these Barbarian conquerors, the subdued natives, inviolably attached to their ancient customs, continually employ themselves in agriculture, from inclination, and from religion. Notwithstanding the frantic despotism of the Mogul government, the Malabar,

contemning and pitying the master whom he obeys, cultivates as ardently as if he was proprietor, the fields of his ancestors, the care of which is intrusted to him by the usurper.

THE Indians shew a great deal of respect towards their labourers. Agriculture has been consecrated by religion, even to the animals appointed for labouring the lands. As the Indies are for the most part deficient in pastures, as horses are scarce, as buffaloes and other cattle for the draught increase but slowly, the ancient Indian policy made it a crime against their religion to kill these useful animals. The Malabars make them more serviceable than any other people: they make use of them, as we do, in labouring the ground; as also in drawing their carriages, and in

carrying burthens of all kinds: there are no other beasts of burden in the neighbourhood of Pondicherry. I am of opinion, that they may be made as useful in all countries.

ON the Coromandel coast the soil is dry, light, and sandy; however, the industry and labour of the natives make it produce two crops yearly, without ever having one fallow year. After the rice harvest is past, there is always a crop of some lesser grains, such as millet, and a kind of French beans, which are produced in great variety, and of various sorts, in India.

THE watering the grounds for the cultivation of rice is the most surprising piece of the husbandry in India.

MACHINE FOR WATERING RICE-
GROUNDS.

If there are neither plenty of rivulets nor fountains in the lands they intend for watering, they dig a pit-well, on the brink of which they raise a pillar of near the same height as the depth of the well. An iron bar at the top of this pillar, which is forked, crossing both divisions horizontally, supports a kind of see-saw, to one end of which a ladder is suspended; the other end of this see-saw projects about thirteen feet from the top of the pillar, having a long pole fastened to it in a position parallel with the pillar, at which a large bucket of wood or copper is hung: there is a large reservoir by the side of this machine, built with bricks,

and closely cemented, raised above the level of the grounds they intend to water; the opening whence the waters are discharged being on that side which fronts the field. Every thing being thus disposed, a man goes to the summit of the column, by the ladder fixed to the see-saw: as soon as he has mounted the top, another man, standing by the side of the reservoir, plunges the bucket, which is suspended by the pole, into the well; upon which he at the top comes down the ladder, and thereby bringing the bucket full of water to a level with the reservoir, the other there empties it. As soon as the reservoir is full, they open a kind of sluice; the inundation begins, and is kept constantly flowing by the operations of these two men, who sometimes are thus busied whole days, the one ascending and de-

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ascending, the other throwing the bucket into the well, and emptying it when full.

MANNER OF LABOUR.

THE Malabars till their lands with instruments like the coulter and soc. They make use of oxen, but for the most part buffaloes; these latter being stronger, and more capable of enduring the heat, than the oxen, which are commonly tender, and very small on the Coromandel coast.

FLOCKS OF SHEEP, &c.

For the most part, these animals are fed with the straw of rice, some herbs,

and boiled beans. You see some small flocks of goats, and others of sheep here and there in the fields, which are different from ours by their being covered with hair instead of wool. They are called CHIENS-MAROUS in the French colonies. These flocks, however, are lean, and increase very slowly.

If the inhabitants of India were to eat the flesh of animals, like the Europeans, they would very soon have no cattle. It appears, therefore, that the religious law making it criminal for an Indian to eat the flesh of animals, has been dictated by the wisdom of sound policy, which has employed the authority of religion to secure obedience to a regulation which the nature of the climate required.

GRAIN, butter, pulse, and fruits, are the chief food of the Malabars. They eat nothing which has ever lived. The countries to the south and west of Indostan are the granaries of this vast continent, and keep the inhabitants in plenty. These countries are still in the possession of the Aborigines of the country, whose laws are very favourable for agriculture. The Moguls have attempted several times, but to no purpose, to make themselves masters of these countries.

GARDENS.

THERE is no sort of pulse equal to ours in the gardens of Malabar. Exclusive of the various kinds of French-bean, some of which are of the arbo-

rescent kind; the best they cultivate is the *BAZELLA*, called in France the *SPINAGE OF CHINA*; this is a lively clambering plant, which, while growing, they support upon sticks, like our pease, or prop up against the walls, which it very soon covers with a most agreeable verdure; it has almost the same taste as our spinage.

ON the *Cōromandel* coast, gardening is not much known. The orchards are better supplied than the gardens; yet they have no fruits equal to those of Europe. They do not understand the art of engrafting. The pine-apple, the mango, the bonana, and the gouvaye are the common fruits there. The two first of these are but indifferent on the *Cōromandel* coast, though excellent on the

coast of Malabar, and many other parts of India.

THE COCOA-TREE.

THE cocoa-tree is the most useful of all the trees in their orchards. This tree bears clusters of nuts of a great size. When these nuts are ripe, they yield a species of oil in great abundance, which the Indians make different uses of, particularly in seasoning their garden stuff; the taste of this oil is very disagreeable to those who are not accustomed to eat it. But the method of rendering the culture of this tree most advantageous is the extracting wine from its fruit. The Indian watches the time when the nuts of the cocoa-tree are of the size of our hazel-nuts, which is soon after the fall

of the flower: he then makes an incision in the stalk of the cluster about seven or eight inches from the trunk of the tree; here he fastens an earthen vessel to receive the juice, which plentifully springs out: he carefully wraps the mouth of the vessel round with a cloth, to keep out the air, which would soon turn it to the fret. The vessel fills in twenty-four hours; and the Indian takes care to alter it every day. This natural wine, which is called SOURY, is sold and drunk in this state. It resembles the taste and strength of the MUST, or new wine of the grape: it keeps but a few days: it is necessary then to distil it, otherwise it would sour, and become of no manner of use. This kind of wine, when distilled, is the liquor which we call AR-RACK.

A COCOA-TREE, managed in this manner, is worth about eight shillings a year. These trees are planted about twenty-five or thirty feet distant from each other. They produce nothing for ten or twelve years, but then bear fruit yearly for above fifty years. They flourish best in a mixed sandy soil; and in pure sand they prosper very well.

THE Malabars cultivate several plants, whose productions are of an oily substance, in the open fields; such as the SESAME or GERGELIN, which is a sort of fox-grass, and the RICIN or PALMA CHRISTI. The fresh oil extracted from this plant, which is made use of in Europe for a violent and dangerous caustic, cannot have the same prejudicial quality in the Indies, as the Malabars consider it as a gentle purgative, and the best remedy

for almost all the distempers incident to sucking children; commonly giving them a spoonful of it, mixed in an equal quantity of their mother's milk, every month.

I SHALL conclude this article with remarking, that the reader must not form an idea of agriculture over all the Indies, from the sketch I have given of that on the Coromandel coast: this coast, and the countries near it, form but a small part of the East-Indies, properly so named: they are, at the same time, the most barren, and have suffered most from the devastations of the Moguls, from the destructive government of these conquerors, and from the continual wars which harraß and depopulate the country. The coasts of Orixa, Malabar, the territory of Surat, the banks of the Ganges, and the interior

parts of Indostan, are much more fruitful, and agriculture flourishes amazingly in several of these countries. I have seen all these things myself, therefore they may be depended on as facts.

THE KINGDOM OF SIAM.

THE kingdom of Siam, which is situated on the peninsula of the Indies beyond the Ganges, is for the most part very fruitful. It is divided by a chain of mountains from north to south, like Indostan, and enjoys, all the year round, and at the same time, two very contrary seasons. The western division, all along the bay of Bengal, is overflowed by constant rains, during the six months that the monsoons continue to blow from the west. On this coast this season is

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looked upon as their winter; whilst in the other division of the kingdom, towards the east, they enjoy the finest climate, and never experience that difference of season which reigns on the western side, except by the inundations of the Menam. This large river runs along a great way among mountains, where the rains concenter: it washes the walls of the capital, and overflows every year, without the least destruction, a beautiful country, all covered with plantations of rice. The slime, which the Menam leaves behind, enriches the soil amazingly; the rice seems to grow up in proportion as the inundation rises, and the river at length gently withdraws by degrees into its bed, as the rice grows ripe, and has no further need for its waters. With what bounty does nature act towards the inhabitants of this delightful country!—

he has, however, done more: the fields profusely produce a great variety of most delicate fruits, which require hardly any cultivation; such as the pine-apple, the mangousta, perhaps the most delicate fruit that is, mangoes of several sorts, and all excellent, several kinds of oranges, the banana, the ducion, the gacca, with other fruits of an inferior quality. Nature, still more bountiful, has also scattered over this country, almost on the surface of the ground, mines of gold, copper, and a kind of fine tin, which they call CALIN there, and in several other parts of India.

Who would imagine that the Siamese, the inhabitants of this terrestrial paradise, surrounded with such great riches, are, perhaps, the most miserable of mortals?

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THE government of Siam is despotic: the sovereign alone enjoys that liberty which is natural to all the human race: his subjects are all his slaves; every one of them is yearly taxed at six months personal service without wages, and even without food: he allows them the other six months to procure themselves wherewithal to exist the year. There is no law that can afford protection to individuals against violence, or in the smallest degree secure them in their property under such a government. Every thing is subjected to the caprice of a prince, rendered brutal by every sort of excess, particularly that of power; who passes his days shut up in his seraglio, without an idea of any thing beyond the walls of his palace; and particularly ignorant of the miserable state of his subjects. These are exposed to the avarice of the

grandeess, who themselves are only the chief slaves, and timidly approach, on appointed days, the presence of their tyrant, whom they worship as a deity, though subject to the most dangerous caprices.

RELIGION alone has preserved the power of protecting against tyranny those who, ranking themselves under its standard, are admitted into the order of the priests of SOMONACONDOM, the divinity of the Siamese. Those who embrace this order, who are very considerable, are by law obliged to observe the strictest celibacy, which, in a warm climate, such as theirs, whilst it is the occasion of great diseases, almost depopulates the island.

WE may easily conceive, that agricul-

ture cannot flourish under such a government; it may indeed be said, that no regard is paid to it at all, when the small piece of land which is laboured is compared to the extensive plains which lie quite waste.

NATURE may be said to do every thing with regard to those grounds which they even have laid out. Mortals oppressed, debased, without spirit, nay, in a manner without hands, give themselves hardly any other trouble than just to reap what the earth produces; and, as the country is of great extent, and but thinly peopled, they enjoy abundance of necessaries, almost without any labour.

FROM the port of Mergin, which is situated on the western coast of this kingdom, to the capital, during a journey of

ten or twelve days, you cross large plains, plentifully watered, and the soil excellent; some of which appear to have been formerly cultivated, but now lie quite desolate. Travellers are obliged to make this journey in caravans, to defend themselves from the tygers and the elephants, to which this fine country is in a manner abandoned, during a journey of eight days there scarce being any thing like an habitation.

THE environs of the capital are cultivated; the lands which belong to the king, those of the princes, the ministers, and principal officers, shew the surprizing fruitfulness of the country, producing, as I have been informed, an increase of two hundred-fold.

THE method in which the people of

Siam cultivate their rice, is first to sow it very thick in a small square plot of ground, well watered, a little below the surface of the ground. As soon as the plants have grown about five or six inches high, they pull them up by the roots, and transplant them, in small parcels of three or four stalks, distant from each other about four inches every way. These plants are placed deep in a clay soil, which has been well laboured before with a plough, drawn by two buffaloes. The rice, transplanted in this manner, has a far greater increase, than if allowed to grow up in the same ground where it was first planted.

It is the Chinese, and the Cochinese, settled in the capital and its environs, who chiefly contribute to the improvement of the lands. These stran-

gers are useful to the sovereign, by the trade they carry on with him, and it is the interest of the government to protect them from oppression.

IN the neighbourhood of the uncultivated lands I have mentioned, there are others, belonging to different individuals, who, discouraged by continual oppressions, have quite abandoned them. However, it is surprising to observe these lands, often neither laboured nor sown for years together, produce extraordinary crops of rice. The grain, carelessly reaped, sows of itself, and re-produces every year another harvest, by the help of the overflowings of the river Menam: which proves, at the same time, the great fruitfulness of the ground, and the extreme wretchedness of the inhabitants.

THE orchards of the prince, and the great Talapoins, a religious sect, are admirable for the great variety of their fruits, all of the most delicious sorts; but no private individual is permitted to enjoy these delicacies. When a man is so unhappy as to have in his grounds a tree of excellent fruit, such as the mangousta, a party of soldiers never fail to come annually, to secure this tree's produce, for the king, or some great minister. They take an account of every mangousta, good or bad, making the proprietor guardian and security for the whole; and, when the fruits ripen, should there happen the least deficiency, the poor proprietor is subjected to all the insolence of unrestrained power; it becomes, of consequence, a real misfortune for a private man to have such a tree.

THE Siamese rear flocks of buffaloes, and black cattle; but they take no other care of them, than to conduct them, in the day time, to the fallow grounds, which abound in pastures, and bring them back at night, to the inclosures, to secure them from the tygers, with which this country abounds. The milk, and a very little labour, is all the advantage they draw from them. Their religion, which is the same as that in Indostan, and which the Talapoints alone know any thing about, forbids them to kill these animals. They elude, however, this law, by selling them to the Mahometans, settled among them, who kill them, and privately sell their flesh. Poultry, particularly ducks, of the best kinds, are in great plenty in the Indies.

THE king keeps a number of tame

elephants. Each of these huge animals has twelve or fifteen men constantly employed in cutting herbs, bananiers, (a kind of large rose) and sugar-canes. They are after all of no real service; they serve only for shew. They display, say the Siamese, the grandeur of their prince; and he conceives an idea of his greatness, more from the number of his elephants, than from the number of his subjects.

THESE animals make most destructive havock wherever they go; their keepers take advantage of this, making every individual, who is possessed of cultivated lands, or gardens, pay a certain tribute every year: should they refuse, the elephants would immediately be let loose, and lay their fields desolate: for what subject would be hardy enough to

dare to fail in respect to the elephants of the king of Siam, many of which, to the disgrace of humanity, are loaded with a profusion of titles, and preferred to the the first dignities in the kingdom?

THE MALAIS.

THE peninsula of Malacca lies beyond the kingdom of Siam; a country formerly well peopled, and, consequently, well cultivated. This nation was once one of the greatest powers, and made a very considerable figure on the theatre of Asia. The sea was covered with their ships, and they carried on a most extensive trade. Their laws, however, were apparently very different from those which at this time subsist among them. They sent out numbers of colonies from

time to time, which, one after another, peopled the islands of Sumatra, Java, Borneo, the Celebes or Macassar, the Moluccas, the Philippines, and those numberless islands of the Archipelago, which are the limits of Asia on the east, and which take up an extent of seven hundred leagues, in longitude, from east to west, by about six hundred of latitude, from north to south. The inhabitants of all these islands, those at least upon the coasts, are the same people; they speak almost the same language, have the same laws, the same customs. Is it not somewhat remarkable, that this people, who have such large possessions, should hardly be known in Europe? I shall endeavour to give you an idea of their laws and customs, by which you will be able to judge of their agriculture.

TRAVELLERS, who make observations on the Malais, are surpris'd to find the laws, customs, manners, and prejudices of the old inhabitants of the north of Europe, in the center of Asia, under the scorching climate of the line. The Malais are governed by feudal laws, that capricious system, conceived for the defence of the liberty of a few against the tyranny of one, whilst the populous are subjected to slavery and oppression.

A CHIEF, who is called king, or sultan, sets forth his commands to his great vassals, who obey when they think fit. These have inferior vassals, who often act in the same manner with respect to them. A small part of the nation live independent, under the title of ORAM-CAI, or NOBLE, and sell their services

to those who pay them best; whilst the greatest part of the nation is composed of slaves, and live continually in bondage.

THE Malais are restless under those laws, being fond of navigation, war, plunder, emigrations, colonies, hazardous enterprizes, adventures, and gallantry. They are continually talking of their honour and their bravery, whilst they are universally considered, by those with whom they have intercourse, as the most faithless and cruel people in the universe; and yet, which appeared very extraordinary to me, they speak the softest language of Asia. What the Count de Forbin has said, in his memoirs, of the ferociousness of the Macassars, is exactly true, and is the reigning character of the whole Malay

nations. More attached to the absurd laws of their pretended honour, than to those of justice or humanity, you always observe, that amongst them, the strong oppress and destroy the weak: their treaties of peace and friendship never subsisting beyond that self-interest which induced them to make them, they are almost continually armed, and either at war amongst themselves, or busied in robbing their neighbours.

THIS ferocity, which the Malais call courage, is so well known to the European companies, who have settlements in the Indies, that they have all agreed in prohibiting the captains of their ships, who may touch at the Malay islands, from taking any seamen of that nation on board, unless in the greatest distress,

and then, on no account, above two or three.

IT is not strange for a few of these cruel barbarians suddenly to embark, attack a vessel by surprise, sword-in-hand, massacre the people, and make themselves masters of her. Malay boats, with twenty-five or thirty men, have been known to board European ships of thirty or forty guns, to take possession of them, and murder, with their swords, great part of the crew. The Malay history is full of such enterprizes, which shew the savageness of these barbarians.

THOSE amongst the Malais, who are not slaves, go always armed: they would think themselves disgraced, if they went abroad without their swords, which

they name CRIT. The industry of this nation even surpasses itself, in the fabric of this destructive weapon.

As their lives are a continued series of agitation and tumult, they could never endure the long flowing habits, which the other Asiatics wear. Their habits are exactly adapted to their shapes, and loaded with a multitude of buttons, which fasten them close to their bodies in every part. I mention these seemingly trifling observations, to prove, that, in climates the most opposite, the same laws produce similar manners, customs, and prejudices. With regard to agriculture their effect is the same.

THE lands which the Malais possess are, commonly, of a superior quality. Nature seems to have taken pleasure

in collecting her most favourite productions there. They have not only those to be found in the territories of Siam, but several others peculiar to these islands. The country is covered with odoriferous woods, such as the eagle or aloes wood, the sandal, and the cassia odorata, a kind of cinnamon. You there breathe an air scented with the odours of numberless flowers of the greatest fragrance, of which there is a perpetual succession the whole year, the sweet flavour of which charms the soul, and inspires the most voluptuous sensations. A traveller, wandering over the plains of Malacca, feels himself strongly impelled to wish his residence fixed in so delightful a place, where nature, without art's assistance, always triumphs.

THE Malay islands produce various sorts of dying woods, particularly the SAPAN, which is the same with the Brasil wood. There are also a number of gold mines, which the inhabitants of Sumatra and Malacca call OPHIRS: some of which, particularly those on the eastern coast, are richer than those of Brasil or Peru. There are likewise mines of fine copper, mixed with gold, which is called TOMBAGE by the inhabitants. In the islands of Sumatra and Banca are mines of calin, or fine tin; and at Succadana, in the island of Borneo, is a mine of diamonds. Those islands also exclusively enjoy the rotin, the sagou, or bread-palm-tree, the camphire, and other precious aromatics.

THE sea too is filled with plenty of fine fish, together with ambergris, pearls,

and those delicate birds nests, (so much in request in China) formed in the rocks with the spawn of fishes, and the foam of the sea, by a kind of small-sized swallow, peculiar to those seas: this is of such an exquisite substance and taste, that the Chinese long bought them for their weight in gold, and still buy them at a great price.

THE Malay is wretched in the midst of all this luxuriance of nature. The culture of the lands, abandoned to slaves, is fallen into contempt. These wretched labourers, constantly dragged from their rustic employments, by their restless masters, who delight in war and maritime enterprizes, have seldom time, and never resolution, to give the necessary attention to the tilling of their lands. Their ground, in general, re-

mains uncultivated; and brings forth no sort of grain for the inhabitants to subsist upon.

SAGOU.

THE sagou-tree, in part, supplies the want of grain. This admirable tree is a present which bountiful nature has made to men incapable of labour. It needs no culture; it is a kind of the palm-tree, which grows naturally, in the woods, to about twenty or thirty feet high; its circumference being sometimes from five to six. Its ligneous bark is almost an inch in thickness, and covers a multitude of long fibres, which, being interwoven with each other, envelope a mass of a gummy sort of meal. As soon as this tree is ripe, a whitish

dust, which transpires through the pores of the leaves, and adheres to their extremities, proclaims its maturity. The Malais then cut them down near the root, and divide them into many sections, which they split into quarters: they then scoop out the mass of mealy substance, which is enveloped by and adheres to the fibres; in order to separate it from the fibres, they dilute it in pure water, and then put it through a straining-bag of fine cloth. When this paste has lost part of its moisture by evaporation, the Malais cast it into a sort of earthen vessels, of different shapes, where they allow it to dry and harden. This paste preserves for many years, and is wholesome nourishing food.

In general, when the Indians eat the

sagou, use no other preparation than diluting it in water; but sometimes they dress it after a different manner: they have the art of separating the finest of the flour, and making it into little grains, somewhat like grains of rice. The sagou, prepared thus, is preferred to the other, for the aged and infirm; and is an excellent cure for many complaints in the stomach. It forms a whitish jelly, very agreeable to the taste, when diluted, either in boiling or cold water.

THOUGH this sagou-bearing-palm grows naturally in the forests, the Malay chiefs have made very large plantations of it, which constitute one of their principal resources for subsistence.

WOULD they give themselves the
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trouble to collect the various plants of those excellent fruits, which nature has so liberally bestowed upon them, they might have the finest orchards in the world: we find, however, none but a few straggling trees planted at random about their houses, ~~at~~ dispersed over their lands without order or symmetry.

SINCE the subjection to the government of the Dutch, the inhabitants of the great island of Java have somewhat better ideas of agriculture than the other Malais. These sovereign merchants have taken advantage of the feudal system of the Malais, to reduce them under their yoke; artfully weakening the regal power, by fomenting, at times, the rebellions of the great vassals; and humbling the vassals, in their turn, by

succouring their princes, when drove
to the brink of destruction.

THE Javanese begin to redeem from
that state of anarchy, the consequence
of their ancient laws now almost remem-
bered no longer. With success they
cultivate rice, indigo, coffee, and sugar-
cane. They rear, on the eastern coast
of the island, and in the districts of Ma-
dur and Solor, in the neighbourhood,
great flocks of very large buffaloes; their
flesh is excellent, and they are very use-
ful in labouring the lands. They have
also great numbers of horned cattle,
perhaps, the largest and finest in the
universe. The common pasturage in
this, and the rest of the Malay islands,
is the same grass I have mentioned un-
der the article of the Isle of France,

which is there almost quite neglected by the colonists.

IT would be proper here to describe the manner of cultivating the spiceries, the indigo, the sugar-cane, and the camphire; but these must be the subject of another discourse. I could have wished also to have comprehended, in this treatise, the observations I have made on the Chinese husbandry. You could then have compared nation with nation; and, after having seen agriculture contemned and debased amongst savages, oppressed and loaded with fetters by their frantic laws, the genuine productions of delirium incompatible with reason, you would have observed this art, which may be called divine, as it was taught to man by the supreme Author of his being, supported and pro-

rected by laws the most plain, those of nature, dictated by her to the first inhabitants of the earth, and preserved, since time began, from generation to generation, by one of the largest and wisest nations in the world. Whilst this comparative representation displayed the wretchedness and calamities of all kinds, which attend the neglect of agriculture, on the one hand, it would have shewed how much this art, when properly honoured, protected, and encouraged, will always encrease the happiness of mankind on the other.

END OF THE FIRST PART.

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THE
TRAVELS
OF A
PHILOSOPHER.

PART SECOND.

LAST year I gave you a small
account of the enquiries I had
made in Asia and Africa concerning the state of agriculture in those regions. I remarked, that there was not the least appearance of it amongst the ignorant and lazy barbarians, who inha-

bit the western coasts of Africa; whilst it flourished, under the shade of liberty, at the Cape of Good Hope, amongst the Dutch. I observed the happy plenty which reigned in the fruitful island of Madagascar, inhabited by a people governed by the greatest simplicity of manners, and with no other laws than nature's. Whilst I did justice also to the system of cultivation that prevailed at the Isle of Bourbon, which, being without a port, and consequently having little or no intercourse with Europe, the colonists have preserved an uncorrupted system of manners, always favourable for agriculture, I was, at the same time, obliged to acknowledge, that this art, which requires perseverance and simplicity, was very much neglected at the Isle of France, which, having two excellent ports, and being much frequented by European

ships, was more influenced by the inconsistent and volatile customs of our part of the universe; and that, in consequence, though the soil was equal to Madagascar and Bourbon in fertility, their harvests commonly failed, and an almost continual want prevailed over the island. I passed from thence to the great peninsula of the Indies, where agriculture, however oppressed by the barbarous laws of the Mogul conquerors, is still honoured and maintained by the religion, the customs, and the perseverance of the conquered Malabars. At Siam, under the happiest climate, and blessed with a soil the most fruitful in the world, we have observed agriculture debased by the indignities of tyranny, and abandoned by a race of slaves, who after they are deprived of their liberty, nothing can interest. I have represented it almost

in the same condition amongst the Malais, who inhabit vast kingdoms, and innumerable islands, where nature has distributed her choicest treasures, and lavished her bounties with a profusion which other regions are not acquainted with. The destructive genius of the feudal laws, which keep this people in a continual ferment, allows not their application to the cultivation of the finest soil that is. Nature alone does all. I am convinced, that if the other nations of the globe, who have the misfortune to be governed by the feudal system, inhabited a climate as happy, and lands as fertile as those of the Malais, their agriculture would be as much neglected: necessity alone could force them to it.

I ENDEAVOURED in my last discourse to give you an idea of the most interest-

ing modes of local agriculture which I have seen: my chief object, however, was to enable you to remark, that in every country, in every region of the universe, the state of agriculture solely depends on the established laws, and, in consequence, on the customs and prejudices from which these laws took their source. But I shall now continue my observations.

ORIGIN OF THE KINGDOM OF PONT-
THIAMAS.

QUITTING the peninsula of Malacca, and the islands of the Malais, towards the north, I fell in with a small territory under the name of CANCAR, but known, on the marine charts, by that of PONTIAMAS. Environed by the

kingdom of Siam, where despotism and depopulation reign; the domains of Cambodia, where no idea of established government subsists; and the territories of the Malais, whose genius, always agitated by their feudal laws, can endure peace neither at home nor abroad; this delightful country was uncultivated, and had very few inhabitants about fifty years ago.

A CHINESE merchant, commander of a vessel which he employed in trade, frequented these coasts. Being a man of that intelligent reflective genius, which so characteristically marks his nation, he could not, without trouble, behold vast tracts of land condemned to barrenness, though naturally more fertile than those which made the wealth of his own country: therefore, he formed a plan for

their improvement. With this view, having first of all hired a number of labourers, some Chinese, others from the neighbouring nations, he, with great address, insinuated himself into the favour of the most potent princes, who, for a certain subsidy, assigned him a guard to protect him.

IN the course of his voyage to Batavia, and the Philippine Islands, he borrowed from the Europeans their most useful discoveries and improvements, chiefly the art of fortification and defence: with respect to internal police, he preferred the Chinese. The profits of his commerce soon made him able to raise ramparts, sink ditches, and provide artillery. These preliminary precautions protected him against the enterprises of the barbarians who surrounded him:

He distributed the lands to his labourers, without the least reservation of any of those taxes or duties known by the names of service or fines of alienation; duties which, by allowing no real property, become the most fatal scourge to agriculture, and is an idea which revolts against the common sense of every wise nation. He provided his colonists also with all kinds of tools fit for the cultivation and improvement of their lands.

In forming a labouring and commercial people, he thought, that no laws ought to be framed, but those which nature has established for mankind in all regions: he made these laws respected, by obeying them first himself, and exhibiting an example of simplicity, industry, frugality, humanity, and honest-

ry: he formed, then, no system of laws—he did more—he established morals.

HIS territories soon became the country of every industrious man, who wished to settle there. His harbour was free to every one. The woods were cleared; the grounds wisely cultivated, and sown with rice; their fields were watered by canals, cut from the rivers; and plentiful harvests, after supplying them with subsistence, furnished an object of extensive trade.

THE environing savages, astonished to see such plenty suddenly succeed to barrenness, flocked for subsistence to the magazines of Ponthiomas; whose dominions, at this day, are looked upon as the most plentiful granary of that

eastern part of Asia; the Malais, the Cochin-Chinese, the Siamese, whose countries are naturally so fertile, considering this small territory as the most certain resource against famine.

HAD the Chinese founder of this colony of mercantile labourers, in imitation of the sovereigns of Asia, established arbitrary imposts; if by the introduction of a feudal system, of which he had examples amongst the neighbouring nations, he had vested in himself the sole property of the lands, under a specious pretence of giving them away to his colonists; if he had made luxury reign in his palace, instead of that simplicity which distinguished his humble dwelling; had he placed his ambition in a splendid court, and multitudes of fawning slaves; had he preferred

the pleasing to the useful arts, despising the industrious, who cultivate the ground with the sweat of their brow, and provide sustenance for themselves and their fellow creatures; had he treated his associates as slaves; had he received strangers in any other manner than as friends into his port; his fields had still been sterile, his realms without inhabitants, who must have died of hunger, in spite of all their knowledge of agriculture, and all the assistance they could derive from the most useful instruments either for tilling or sowing their grounds. But the sage Kiang-tse, which is the name of this judicious Chinese, persuaded that he should be always rich, if his labourers were so, established only a very moderate duty on all the merchandize entered at his port; the produce of his lands appear-

ing to him sufficient to make him potent and great. He was respected for his integrity, his moderation, and his humanity. He never desired to reign; but only to found the empire of reason. His son, who now reigns, inherits his virtues as well as his possessions: by agriculture, and the trade he carries on with the produce of his lands, he has become so powerful, that the savages, his neighbours, call him king, a title hateful to him. He pretends to no right of sovereignty, but the noblest of all, that of doing good; happy in being the first labourer, and the first merchant of his country, he deserves, as well as his father, the title of The Friend of Men, which is more glorious than that of king.

WHAT a difference there is between

such men and those conquerors so famous, who surprise and lay waste the earth; who, abusing the right of conquest, have established laws, which, even after the world has been freed of these tyrants, has perpetuated, for ages, the wretchedness of mankind!

CAMBOYA AND TSIAMPA:

WE find the countries of Camboya and Tsiampa north of Ponthiamas. They, particularly, are naturally fertile, and appear, in former times, to have been well cultivated; but the government of these two small states having no settled form, the inhabitants being continually busied in destroying tyrants, only to receive others in their place, have neglected to cultivate their

lands. Their fields, which might be covered with rice, with herds, and with flocks, are deserts; and the natives are reduced to feed on a few sorry roots, which they collect from amidst the brambles, that overspread their lands.

It surprises travellers to find the ruins of an old city, built with stone, the architecture of which resembles that of Europe, at a small distance from the miserable canton of Camboya. The neighbouring fields too still preserve the traces of ridges: every thing shews that agriculture and the other arts have once been in a flourishing condition there; but they have now disappeared, with the nation who cultivated them. Those by whom this country is at present inhabited have no history, or tra-

dition, which can enlighten this subject in the least.

COCHIN-CHINA.

THE Cochin-Chinese, who border on Camboya to the north, observing the lands of this kingdom desolate and neglected, some years ago took possession of such tracks as were most convenient, and have there introduced an excellent culture. The province of Donnay, usurped in this manner from Camboya, is at present the granary of Cochin-China. This kingdom, one of the largest in Eastern Asia, was inhabited by an inconsiderable nation, barbarous and savage, called Loi, about one hundred and fifty years ago, who lived partly by fishing, partly on roots, and the wild

fruits of the country, and regarded agriculture very little.

A Tonquinese prince, unsuccessful in a war he carried on against the king of Tonquin, under whom he enjoyed an office like the Maires de Palais, under the Merovingian race of the kings of France, retired with his soldiers and adherents across the river which separates that kingdom from Cochin-China. The negroes, who then possessed this country, fled before these foreigners, and took refuge among the mountains of Tsiampa. After a long war with their ancient enemies, who pursued them, the Tonquinese runaways remained at length quiet possessors of the country called Cochin-China: it extends about two hundred leagues from north to south, but narrow and

unequal from east to west. They then wholly applied themselves to the cultivation of rice, which, being the common food of the inhabitants of Asia, is to them an object of the greatest importance. They separated into little cantonments, and established themselves on the plains, which extend along the banks of the rivers.

THE fruitfulness of the soil, which had been a long time uncultivated, soon plentifully rewarded their labours; population increased in proportion to the culture; and their cantons extended in such a manner, that all the plains of this large country being put into a state of improvement, they were tempted to encroach upon those of Camboya, which were in a manner quite abandoned. I never saw any country where the pro-

gress of population was so remarkable as in Cochin-China, which must be attributed not only to the climate, and the fertility of the soil, but to the simplicity of their manners, to the prudence and industry of the women as well as the men, and to the different kinds of excellent fish, which, with rice, is their common food.

CULTURE OF VARIOUS SORTS OF RICE
IN COCHIN-CHINA.

THERE are different sorts of rice cultivated by the Cochin-Chinese: the **LITTLE RICE**, the grain of which is small, oblong, and transparent; this is by far the most delicate; it is commonly ministered to the sick: the **GREAT LONG RICE** is that whose shape is round:

the RED RICE, so called because the grain is enclosed in a husk of a reddish colour, which sticks so closely, that it requires a very uncommon operation to divide it. These three sorts are produced in the greatest plenty, and form the chief subsistence of the inhabitants. They require water, as the grounds where they are cultivated must be overflowed.

THEY propagate also two other kinds of dry rice, which grow in dry soils, and, like our wheat, need no other watering but what they receive from the clouds. One of these species of rice has a grain as white as snow, which, when dressed, is of a clammy substance; they make various sorts of paste of it, such as vermicelli. Both these kinds form a considerable article in their trade

with China. They cultivate them only on the mountains and rising grounds, which they labour with the spade. They sow these grains as we do wheat, about the end of December, or beginning of January, when the rainy season ends: they are not above three months in the ground, and yield a plentiful crop.

I AM induced to believe, that the culture of this valuable grain would succeed very well in France. In the years 1749 and 1750 I frequently travelled over the mountains of Cochin-China, where this rice is cultivated; they are very high, and the temperature of the air cold: in the month of January, 1750, I observed that the rice was very green, and above three inches in height, although the liquor in Reau-

mur's thermometer was only about three degrees above the freezing point.

I CARRIED some hundred weights of this grain to the Isle of France, where it was sown, and succeeded, producing a larger crop than any other species. The colonists received my present with the greatest eagerness, as, exclusive of its superior increase, it has a better taste, is less troublesome, as the fields do not need to be overflowed; and, as it ripens fifteen or twenty days sooner than the other sorts, it can be reaped and secured before the stormy season, which often makes great havock with their later harvests. The other kinds of rice, being of a slower growth, require their grounds to be laid under water, after the manner of the natives

of the Coromandel coast *; but our colonists regard agriculture so little, that it has never yet been introduced by them.

ONE might have imagined, that the profits flowing from the cultivation of dry rice, would have engaged the colonists to attend very carefully to it; and that, from the Isle of France, it might have been easily introduced into Europe: but I have endeavoured to procure it from this island to no purpose; those to whom I have applied, have sent me only common rice, which requires water and warmth. The culture of dry rice has, like every other kind of agriculture, been left to the unexperienced ignorance of slaves, who

* See Page 39.

have mixed all the different kinds together, in such a manner, that the rice of Cochin-China being ripe long before the others, the grains have dropt from the ears before they were reaped, and the species, in this manner, has been, by degrees, quite lost in that island. If any traveller, whom business or curiosity might lead to Cochin-China, would send over but a few pounds of this excellent grain, he would deserve our greatest thanks.

THE common rice is cultivated by the Cochin-Chinese, very near in the same way as the Malabars on the Coromandel coast do. After having ploughed their ground twice, they sow the rice in a small field which has been well laboured with the spade; they cover the surface of this little field with water,

not very high ; and as soon as the rice is about five or six inches in height, they harrow over their large fields, and overflow them with water ; then pulling up the rice-plants in the seed-plots, transplant them into these grounds, thus prepared, in small parcels of four or five stalks, about the distance of six inches from each other. This work commonly employs the women and children.

THE Cochin-Chinese have no machine for overflowing their lands, nor indeed have they occasion for any: their plains, which from one end of the kingdom to the other are commanded by a chain of high mountains, are supplied with springs and rivulets in abundance, which naturally overflow the grounds, according as their course is directed.

THERE are also various sorts of grain cultivated here, such as the mahis, millets of different kinds, several species of the French bean, potatoes, yams, and plenty of other roots fit for the subsistence of men and animals. But the cultivation of the sugar-cane, next to the rice, is the most important advantage to them; and Cochin-China produces it more abundantly than any country in Asia.

SUGAR-CANES.

THERE are two sorts of sugar-canes in this country; the first grows high and thick, the joints at a great distance from one another, the colour always green, the juice plenty, with very little of the salt in it. This species of cane is in ge-

neral use for feeding and fattening of cattle; and experience teaches them that no sort of food fattens mankind, as well as animals, sooner or better, than this sugar-cane, eat while green, and the sugar which is extracted from it.

THE second kind is smaller in every way, with its joints approaching nearer together: it assumes a yellow colour when ripe; and contains less water, and more salt, than the other.

WHEN the Cochin-Chinese prepare the ground for the sugar-cane, they turn it up to the depth of two feet; this operation is performed with a plank. They then plant joints or eyes of the cane, three and three together, in a horizontal position, almost in the same way as they plant vines in many French provinces. These slips are planted chequer-wise, a-

bout eighteen inches deep in the ground, six feet distant from each other; they perform this operation towards the conclusion of the rainy season, so that the slips may be sufficiently watered, till such time as they have taken root. During the first six months, they give them two dressings with a kind of pick-axe, in order to destroy the weeds, and preserve a moisture about the roots of the canes, by heaping the earth around them.

THEY gather the first crop twelve, and sometimes fourteen, months after the plantation. By this time the canes, though planted at six feet distance, become so bushy, that it is impossible to enter the field, without making use of an axe to clear your way.

AFTER the canes are cut, and tied up

into bundles, they are carried to the mills, to extract their juice. As these engines have been described by many travellers, I shall not here describe their form, which much resembles those of the West-Indies: they employ oxen or mules, instead of water, to set the two cylinders in motion, between which the sugar-canes are pressed.

WHEN the juice is extracted, they boil it a few hours in large kettles, in order to evaporate part of its water: it is then carried to the neighbouring market, and sold in that condition. Here the industry and the profits of the Cochinchinese planter ends. The merchants buy the juice, which resembles pure water; they re-boil it, throwing some alkaline substance, such as the ashes of the leaves of the musa or bananier,

and shell-lime into the kettle; they know no other; these ingredients throw up a thick scum, which the refiner carefully takes off: the action of the alkali hastens the separation of the salt from the water, and, by the force of boiling, reduces the juice of the cane to the consistence of syrup. As soon as this syrup begins to granulate, they decant it into a great earthen vessel, where they cool it about an hour; when a kind of crust, still soft, and of a yellowish taint, appears on the top of the syrup; then they immediately empty it into a vessel of a conic shape, which they name a **FORM**. Without this intermediate operation of cooling the syrup, it would harden into a mass, and not being granulated, would of consequence want one material quality of sugar.

THESE sugar-cones, or forms, are of baked earth, in Cochin-China, like those of our West-India colonies, about three feet high, pierced at their narrow extremities, and commonly hold about forty or fifty pounds of sugar. These FORMS, when full, are placed on another earthen vessel, the mouth of which is proportioned to receive the narrow end of the cone, and must be large enough to hold the coarse syrup, which distils from the sugar, through some straw which imperfectly stops up the little opening in the bottom of the FORM.

WHEN they suppose the syrup has acquired the consistence of salt in every part of the cone, they then proceed to whiten and purify it. They dissolve a fine sort of whitish clay in a trough, with such a quantity of water as, when

thus prepared, prevents it from having too much consistence; they then lay it upon the surface of the sugar with a truel, to the thickness of about two inches, in the void space left at the top of the FORM by the condensing of the sugar, after purging itself of the coarser syrup or melasses. The water contained in the clay penetrating by degrees into the mass, washes it, and carries off insensibly the remaining syrup, and every foreign particle that adheres most closely to the sugar. When the clay hardens, they replace it with a fresh quantity, diluted as the first: this operation, which lasts about twelve or fifteen days, is the same here as in our West-India colonies. Some refiners of Cochin-China, however, have a different method. In stead of clay, tempered thus with water, they cut the trunk of the musa or

bananier into little pieces, which they place upon the sugar: the trunk of this tree is very watery; the water of a detergent quality; and distills from the fibres, which envelope it, in very small drops. Those who follow this method pretend, that the operation is thereby rendered less tedious, and that the sugar acquires a more beautiful colour.

THE process of the Cochin-Chinese, in refining their sugar, goes no further: they know nothing about the stoves in use in the West-Indies. After having clayed their sugars sufficiently, they sell them in the public markets, particularly to the Chinese, and other foreigners, who are invited to their ports by the moderate price of this commodity, which is cheaper at Cochin-China than any other place in India.

THE white sugar of the best quality is generally sold at the port of Faifo, in exchange for other merchandize, at the rate of about fourteen shillings sterling a hundred weight. There is a great trade in this commodity. The Chinese alone, whose lands do not produce enough for their own consumption every year, transport above forty thousand barrels, weighing about two thousand each, from Cochin-China.

It must be remarked, that this country, which produces this commodity so plentifully, and at so low a price, being a new kingdom, ought to be looked upon, in some measure, as a colony: it is worthy observation too, that the sugar-cane is there cultivated by free men, and all the process of preparation and refining, the work of free hands. Compare

then the price of the Cochin-Chinese production with the same commodity which is cultivated and prepared by the miserable slaves of our European colonies, and judge, if, to procure sugar from our colonies it was necessary to authorize by law the slavery of the unhappy Africans transported to America. From what I have observed at Cochin-China, I cannot doubt in the least, but that if our West-India colonies had been distributed without reservation amongst a free people, they would have produced double the quantity that is now procured from the labour of the unhappy savages.

WHAT advantage, then, has Europe got, polished as it is, and thoroughly versed in the laws of nature, and the rights of mankind, by legally authori-

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zing the daily outrages against human nature in our colonies, allowing them to debase man almost below the level of the brutal creation? These slavish laws have proved as opposite to its interest as they are to its honour, and to the laws of humanity. I have often made this remark:

LIBERTY and property are the foundation of plenty, and good agriculture: I never saw it flourish where those rights of mankind were not steadily established. The earth, which lavishly multiplies her productions, under the hands of the free-born labourer, seems to shrink into barrenness under the sweat of the slave. Such is the great Author of our nature's pleasure, who has made man free, and assigned to him the earth, that he might cultivate his possession with the

sweat of his brow; but still should possess his liberty.

THE Cochini-Chinese, exclusive of the sugar-cane, employ themselves in the culture of other productions, of great importance both to their interior fabrics, and external commerce.

THEY cultivate the cotton-tree, the mulberry, the pepper, the varnish-tree, the date, the tea, the indigo, and the saffron, with a plant peculiar to the country, named TSAI, which, being fermented like indigo, plentifully furnishes a flower of a green colour, which, in dying, gives a lasting tincture of a fine emerald colour. This plant would undoubtedly be a very precious present to our West-India colonies.

I MUST decline entering into a detail of the various processes attending these different cultures at present. They will afford subject for some future discourses.

IN Cochin-China, the soil is commonly excellent, and they cultivate it well. Their mountains are generally fallow, as population is not even sufficiently considerable for the cultivation of all the plain grounds they have taken possession of in Camboya: these mountains produce, however, the eagle or aloes-wood, which is the most valuable perfume in the universe; the sapan-wood, the same with that of Brasil; and the cinnamon, in small quantities indeed, but far superior in quality to that of Ceylon. The Chinese pay three or four times more for it than for that which the Dutch import from that island. They have like-

wise different kinds of admirable wood for joyner and cabinet-work, particularly the rose-wood; the tea-wood is excellent for building, and is preferable to all others in the building of the royal galleys, having every property that can be desired either for beauty or solidity. From their mountains also, and from the forests with which they are covered, they procure ivory, musk, wax, iron, and gold in great plenty. These mountains too are full of game, such as deer, antelopes, wild goats, peacocks, pheasants, &c. The chase is free to all, but dangerous from the number of tygers, elephants, rhinoceros, and other carnivorous and destructive animals, which are very plenty in the forests.

THE sea, which washes their coasts, as well as the rivers, are well supplied

with excellent fish. Every one has the liberty of fishing; in which the Cochin-Chinese take great delight. They live chiefly on fish and rice, as I have before remarked.

THEIR domestic animals are, the horse for the road, the buffalo for labour, and the cow, the hog, the goat, the goose, the duck, and hens, of different kinds, for the table. These animals thrive very well, and in great plenty. The king alone reserves to himself the exclusive right of breeding elephants for the war; and this is a reservation which no one envies him. He commonly maintains four hundred of them; he could maintain four thousand men at a much less expence. The Cochin-Chinese have a few good fruits; the pine-apple, and oranges of various sorts, are the best their

country produces. They do not cultivate the vine, though it is one of the native productions of their lands. They are but poorly provided with pulse. In short, their orchards and their gardens are very small. They attach themselves to the more essential branches of agriculture.

ALTHOUGH this art is not yet arrived at that degree of perfection in Cochin-China, to which it might be carried, with the advantage of such an excellent soil, yet the manners of the people being very favourable, it flourishes greatly. The Cochin-Chinese are gentle, hospitable, frugal, and industrious. There is not a beggar in the country; and robbery and murder are quite unknown. A foreigner may wander over the kingdom, from one end to another, (the ca-

pital excepted) without meeting the least insult: he will be every where received with a most eager curiosity, but, at the same time, with great benevolence. I have here remarked a custom singular indeed, but expressive of their goodness of heart. A Cochin-Chinese traveller, who has not money enough to defray his expences at an inn, enters the first house of the town or village he arrives at: no body inquires his business; he speaks to none, but waits in silence the hour of dinner; so soon as the rice is served up, he modestly approaches, sits down at table along with the family, eats, drinks, and goes away, without speaking one word, or any person's putting a single question to him; it was enough they saw he was a man, a brother in distress; they wanted no further information.

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THE six first kings, establishers of this monarchy, governed the nation as a father governs his family; they established the laws of nature alone; and they paid the first obedience to them themselves. Chiefs of an immense family of labourers, they gave the first example of labour; they honoured and encouraged agriculture, as the most useful and honourable employment of the human race. They required only a small annual free-gift from their subjects, to defray the expence of their defensive war against their Tonquinese enemies.

THIS imposition was regulated, by way of poll-tax, with the greatest equity. Every man, able to labour the ground, paid in to the magistrate, on account of the prince, a small sum, pro-

portioned to the strength of his constitution, and the vigour of his arm; and nothing more. It was under their reign, that this nation multiplied so amazingly, in consequence of the abundance furnished by the cultivation of their lands. Whilst they reigned, the treaties entered into, on the banks of the river which separates Tonquin from Cochin-China, between the chiefs of their family and those who followed them in their retreat, were most religiously observed. It is to this reciprocal faithfulness that Cochin-China owes its present flourishing condition, with regard to power, population, and agriculture. Their successor, who now reigns, inherits their goodness of heart, but has the weakness to suffer himself to be governed by his slaves. These have acquired the art of separating the

interest of the prince from that of his people. They have inspired him with the thirst after personal wealth. The large quantity of gold which they have dug from the mines, during this reign, has already proved detrimental to industry and agriculture. In the palace it has been productive of luxury and corruption, which always attend it.

THIS prince has been insensibly led to hate the mean habitations of his forefathers. He has built a fine palace, a league in circumference, environed by a brick wall, on the model of that of Peking. Sixteen hundred pieces of cannon, mounted around the palace, announce to the people the approaching loss of their liberties and rights.

HE found a necessity too for a win-

ter palace, a summer palace, and an autumn palace. The ancient taxes were not sufficient to defray these expences; they were enlarged; and new impositions devised, which, being no longer voluntary contributions, could not be levied but by force, and tyrannical oppression. His courtiers, who found their interest in the corruption of their prince, have called him the King of Heaven: Vous Tsoi, hearing himself frequently so stiled, at length thought he might assume it. "Why," as he was one day addressing himself to me, he said, "do not you come oftener to pay your court to the King of Heaven?"

THESE designing sycophants, who secure every avenue to the royal ear, have had the craftiness to over-awe the

ordinary administration of justice; and, taking advantage of exemption from punishment, have plundered the labourers, and filled the provinces with oppression and distress.

I HAVE observed all along the highways whole villages newly deserted by their inhabitants, worn out by fruitless labour, and everlasting exactions, and their lands, in consequence, falling back to their original uncultivated condition.

IN the midst of all this growing disorder, the prince, whose mind has been surprised by fawning flatterers, and who alone is ignorant of the villainy of those who surround him, still preserves a respect for the manners of his forefathers; he does not, indeed, like

them, give an example of personal labour, but still his desire is to protect agriculture.

I HAVE seen him, at the beginning of the new year, preside, with all the simplicity of his predecessors, at the general assembly of the nation, which is held every year on that day, in the open field, in order to renew the reciprocal oath for observation of the primordial contract, which established him father of his people, at the same time that they invested him solely with the power, the noblest indeed of all, of making his people happy.

WHEN he is talking of his subjects, he calls them still by no other name than that of his children. I have seen him too assist, like a simple individual,

in the annual assembly of his family, according to the ancient custom of the nation; an assembly where the most aged always preside, without regard to the dignities of those of younger years. This, however, seemed to me only a formality venerable from custom; for what is man, where the King of Heaven is?

CORRUPTION, it is true, has not yet infected the general body of the people; they still preserve their primitive manners: it is hitherto confined to the palace, and the capital; its source, however, is too elevated to prevent its poisoned streams from flowing to the plains. It is from the great that the corruption of a people ever derives its origin.

WHEN it shall have infected every rank; when the foundations of agriculture, liberty and property, already attacked by the great, shall be overthrown; when the profession of the farmer shall become the most despicable, and have the least gain, what must be the fate of agriculture? Without a flourishing agriculture, what must be the fate of those multitudes, brought up under its wing? What must be the fate of prince and people? It will resemble that of the nation who possessed the country before them; perhaps that of the barbarians, who yielded it to that nation: of them there are no remains, but the ruins of a large wall, near the capital, which appears to have been part of a great city: it is of brick, and of a form very different from what is to be seen in the other countries

of Asia: no history, however, no tradition has preserved the memory of the builders.

UPON the whole, I conclude, from the general corruption which threatens the manners of the Cochin-Chinese, that agriculture is on the decline, and that whatever efforts they may make to support it, it has now passed its best state, and must inevitably degenerate.

C H I N A.

I AM now near the end of my travels. Quitting the coasts of Cochin-China, and directing my course towards the north-east, I proceeded for China, which the Cochin-Chinese respectfully

call, NUSE D' AI MING—THE DOMINIONS OF THE GREAT LUMINARY. After failing some days, before there was any appearance of land, I saw along the horizon a forest of masts, and presently afterwards a vast number of boats, which covered the surface of the water. These were a great multitude of fishermen, whose industry drew subsistence for numbers from the sea. I now began to perceive land; I advanced to the mouth of the river, still amidst crowds of fishers, throwing out their lines on every side. I entered the river of Canton; which is inhabited like the land; its banks lined with ships at anchor; a great number of small craft are constantly gliding along in every direction, some with sails, others with oars, often vanishing quickly from the sight, as they enter the innumerable

canals, dug with amazing labour, across extensive plains, which they water and render fertile. Great fields, arrayed in all the splendor of the harvest, with stately villages rising to the sight on all sides, embellish the remoter view, whilst mountains, covered with verdure, cut into terrasses, and shaped into amphitheatres, form the back ground of this beautiful landscape.

I soon come to Canton, where fresh subjects for admiration arise; the noise, the motion, the throng encreases; the water, as well as land, being every where covered with multitudes. Astonished at the surprizing appearance, I inquire into the numbers of inhabitants of this city and suburbs; and, after comparing different accounts, find that they must amount at least to eight

hundred thousand in number. My astonishment, however, is greatly augmented, when I learn, that, to the northward of Canton, about five leagues up the river, is a village named FACHAN, which contains a million of inhabitants, and that every part of this great empire, extending about six hundred leagues from north to south, and as much from east to west, was peopled in the same proportion.

By what art can the earth produce subsistence for such numbers? Do the Chinese possess any secret art of multiplying the grain and provisions necessary for the nourishment of mankind? I passed over the fields, I introduced myself amongst the labourers, who are commonly gentle, polite, and affable, with some share of learning, and know-

ledge of the world, to satisfy myself and see the reason of it. I examine, and pursue them through all their operations, and observe that their secret consists solely in manuring their lands judiciously, ploughing them to a considerable depth, sowing them in the proper season, turning every inch of ground which can produce the most inconsiderable crop to advantage, and preferring the culture of grain to every other kind of culture, as being the most important.

THIS system of culture, the last article excepted, appears to be the same that is recommended in all our best authors, both ancient and modern, who have wrote on this subject; our common labourers are acquainted with it; but how much must our European farmers

be surprised, when they are told, that the Chinese have no meadows, natural nor artificial, and have not the least conception of fallowing, never permitting their lands to lie the smallest time fallow.

THE Chinese labourers would consider meadows, of every denomination, as lands in a state of nature; they sow their lands all with grain, and give the preference to such grounds as we generally lay out in meadows, which, lying low, and being properly situated with respect to water, are consequently the most fertile. They affirm, that a field sown with grain, will yield as much straw for the nourishment of cattle, as it would have produced of hay, besides the additional advantage of the grain for the maintenance of man, of which

they can spare too, in plentiful seasons, a small portion for the animal creation.

SUCH is the system adhered to from one end of the empire to the other, and confirmed by the experience of four thousand years, amongst a people the most attentive to their interest of any nation in the universe.

THAT which must render this plan of agriculture the more inconceivable to Europeans, is the idea of their never allowing their lands to lie one season unlaboured. Those who for some years have endeavoured, with such public-spirited zeal, to re-animate amongst us this neglected art, have considered, as the first and most important object, the multiplication of artificial meadows, to

supply the defect of natural ones, for the fattening of cattle; without once venturing to think of suppressing the manner of fallowing the grounds, however far they carried their system of increasing the number of artificial pastures.

THIS system, which appears the most plausible of any they have projected, and is received with the greatest partiality by our farmers, is, nevertheless, contradicted by the constant experience of the greatest and the most ancient land-labouring nation in the universe, who regard the practice of meadows, and fallowing grounds, as an abuse, destructive of plenty and population, which are the sole great objects of agriculture.

A Chinese labourer could not but laugh, if you told him, that the earth ought to rest at a certain fixed period of time: he certainly would say, that we deviated greatly from the point in view, could he read our treatises ancient and modern, our wonderful speculations on agriculture: what would he say, if he saw our lands, part of them fallow, part of them employed in useless cultures, and the remainder badly labour-ed? What would he say, what must be his feelings, if, in travelling over our fields, he observed the extreme wretchedness and barbarism of their miserable cultivators?

Most part of the Chinese lands are not superior to ours: you there see, as with us, some excellent grounds, others middling, the rest bad; some soils strong,

others light; lands where clay, and lands where sand, gravel, and flints every where predominate.

ALL these grounds, even in the northern provinces, yield every year two crops, and in those towards the south often five in two years, without one single fallow season, during the many thousands of years that they have been converted to the purposes of agriculture.

THE Chinese use the same manures as we do, in order to restore those salts and juices to their grounds, which an unintermitting production is continually consuming. They know nothing about marl, but make use of common salt, lime, ashes, and all sorts of animal dung, but above all that which we throw

into our rivers: they make great use of urine, which is carefully preserved in every house, and sold to advantage: in short, every thing produced by the earth is conveyed to it again with the greatest care, into whatever shape the operations of nature or art may have transformed it.

WHEN their manures are at any time scarce, they supply the deficiency, by turning up the ground, with the spade, to a great depth, which brings up to the surface of the field a new soil, rich with the juices of that which descends in its room.

WITHOUT meadows the Chinese maintain a great number of horses, buffaloes, and other animals of every kind necessary for labour, for sustenance, and for

manure. These animals are fed some with straw, others with roots, beans, and grain of every kind. It is true, they have fewer horses and horned cattle, in proportion, than we have, yet it is not necessary that they should have more.

THE whole country is cut into canals, dug by the industry of the inhabitants, extending from river to river, which divide and water this great kingdom, like a garden. Travelling, transporting of goods, almost every species of carriage is performed on these canals, with great ease, and small expence: they do not even make use of horses to drag their boats; every thing is done by the sail or the oar, which they manage with singular dexterity, even in going up the rivers. Where any kind

of labour can be performed, at a moderate price, by men, it is a maxim with them never to employ animals. In consequence of this, the banks of their canals are cultivated almost to the water's edge; they lose not an inch of ground: their public roads resemble our foot-path; their canals, however, are far more useful than highways: they convey fertility every where, and furnish the people great part of their subsistence in fish. There is no comparison between the weight which can be transported in a boat, and that which can be conveyed by any kind of land-carriage; no proportion between the expence.

THE Chinese are still less acquainted with the use, or rather the luxury of chariots, and equipages of every kind,

which crowd the principal cities of Europe. The horses necessary for these, assembled in thousands in our capitals, consume the produce of numberless acres of our best lands, which, if cultivated with grain, would afford subsistence for multitudes, who are perishing for hunger. These Chinese wish rather to maintain men than horses.

THE emperor and chief magistrates are carried through the cities by men, with safety, and with dignity; their march is sedate and majestic, it threatens not with danger those who walk on foot: they travel in a sort of galleys, safer, more convenient, equally magnificent, and less expensive than our land equipages.

I HAVE before remarked, that the

Chinese lose not an inch of ground. They are very far, therefore, from allotting great parks, of the finest ground, for the maintenance alone of deer, in contempt of the human race. The emperors, even those of the Tartar line, have never hitherto dreamt of forming these parks; still less the grandees; that is, the magistrates and the learned: such an idea could never find place in the mind of a Chinese. Even their country houses, and boxes of pleasure, present nothing to the eye all around, but useful cultures, agreeably diversified. That which constitutes their principal beauty, is their agreeable situation, judiciously improved, where, in the disposition of the various parts which form the whole, there every where reigns a happy imitation of that beauti-

ful disorder of nature, from whence art has borrowed all her charms.

THE most rocky hills, which, in France, and other places of Europe, they turn into vineyards, or totally neglect, are there compelled, by dint of industry, to produce grain. The Chinese are acquainted, indeed, with the vine, which here and there they plant in arbours; but they consider it as luxury, and the wine it produces as an unnecessary superfluity: they would imagine it a sin against humanity, to endeavour to procure, by cultivation, an agreeable liquor, whilst, from the want of that grain which this vineyard might have produced, some individual perhaps might be in danger of starving for want.

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THE steepest mountains, even, are rendered accessible: at Canton, and from one end of the empire to the other, you observe mountains cut into terrasses, representing, at a distance, large pyramids divided into different stages, which seem to exalt their heads to heaven. Every one of these terrasses yields yearly a crop of some sort of grain, even of rice; and you cannot withhold your admiration, when you see the water of the river, the canal, or the fountain, which glides by the foot of the mountain, raised from terrafs to terrafs, even to the top, by means of a simple portable machine, which two men with ease carry and put in motion.

EVEN the sea, which seems to threaten the massy globe it surrounds, has been forced, by industry and labour, to

give up part of its domains to the Chinese cultivator.

NANKING and Tché-kiang, the two most beautiful provinces of the empire, formerly covered with water, have been united to the continent several ages ago, with an art far superior to that which is so much admired in the modern works of Holland.

THE Chinese had to struggle with a sea, whose natural flowing from east to west urges it continually towards the coasts of these two provinces; whilst the Dutch have had nothing to oppose but a sea, which, by the same natural motion, always avoids their western shores.

THE people of China are capable of the most stupendous works; I never saw

their equals in labouring. Every day in the year is a working day, except the first, destined for paying visits to each other, and the last, which is consecrated to the ceremonial duties they pay to their ancestors.

A LAZY man would be treated with the greatest contempt, and regarded as a paralytic member, a load to the body of which he made a part; the government would not in the least allow it. How opposite from the ideas of other Asiatics, where none are admitted to any degree of estimation, but those who, from their situation in life, have nothing to do! An ancient emperor of China, in a public instruction, exhorting the people to labour, observed, that if in one corner of the empire there was one man who did nothing, there must, in some o-

ther quarter, be another who suffers on that account, deprived of the necessaries of life. This wise maxim is fixed in the breast of every Chinese; and, with this people so open to reason, he who pronounces a sage maxim pronounces a law.

THIS is, gentlemen, a slight sketch of the principal picture of Chinese agriculture, with the peculiar genius of that people for this art. The limits of my discourse will not allow me at present to recount all the different cultures I have observed in this country: I shall only say, that they are such as plentifully supply all the necessities and conveniencies of the most populous nation in the universe, and furnish, with their superfluity, an important article for foreign trade.

WE may remark from these observations, that agriculture flourishes in China more than in any other nation in the world: yet it is not to any process peculiar to their labour, it is not to the form of their plough, or their method of sowing, that this happy state, and the abundance attendant on it, is to be attributed; it must principally be derived from their manner of government, the immutable foundations of which have been laid deep, solely by the hand of reason, coeval almost with the beginning of time; and from their laws, dictated by nature to the first of men, and sacredly preserved from generation to generation, engraved in the united hearts of a great people, not in obscure codes, devised by chicanerie and deceit. In short, China owes the prosperity of her agriculture to the plainness of her man-

ners, and to her laws, which are those of nature and reason.

THIS empire was established by labourers, in those happy times when the laws of the great Creator were still held in remembrance, and the culture of the earth regarded as the grandest of all employments, the most worthy of mankind, and the chief trade of all. From FOU-HI (who was the first chief of this nation, some hundreds of years after the deluge, if we follow the version of the Septuagint, and in this quality presided over agriculture) all the emperors, without excepting one, even to this day, glory in being the first labourers of their realm.

THE Chinese historians have carefully preserved an anecdote of generosity

in two of the ancient emperors, who, not observing among their children any one worthy of mounting a throne, which virtue alone ought to inherit, named two simple labourers to succeed them. These labourers, according to the Chinese annals, advanced the happiness of mankind, during very long reigns; their memory is still remembered with veneration. It is needless to mention how much examples, like these, honour and animate agriculture.

THE Chinese nation has always been governed like a family, of which the emperor is father: his subjects are his children, without any other inequality but that which is established by talents, and by merit. Those puerile foolish distinctions of NOBILITY, and PLEBEIANS, MEN OF FAMILY, and MEN OF MEAN

BIRTH, are no where to be found, but in the croud of new people, still barbarous, who, having forgot the common origin of all men, unthinkingly insult and debase the whole human race; whilst that nation, whose government is ancient, dating its commencement with the first ages of the world, are sensible that all mankind are born equal, all brothers, all noble. Their language has not even hitherto invented a term for expressing this pretended distinction of birth. The Chinese, who have preserved their annals from the remotest times, and who are all equally the children of the emperor, have never so much as suspected an inequality of origin amongst them.

FROM this principal, that the emperor is father, and the people his children, spring all the duties of society, all

the duties of morality, every virtue of humanity, the union of every wish for the common good of the family, consequently an attachment to labour, and above all to agriculture.

THIS art is honoured, protected, and practised by the emperor, and the great magistrates, who for the most part are the sons of simple labourers, whom merit has raised to the first dignities of the empire; and, in short, by the whole nation, who have the good sense to honour an art the most useful to men, in preference to others more frivolous, and less important.

CEREMONY OF OPENING THE
GROUNDS.

ON the fifteenth day of the first moon, in every year, which generally corresponds to the beginning of March, the emperor in person performs the ceremony of opening the grounds. This prince, in great pomp, marches to the field appointed for the ceremony: the princes of the imperial family, the presidents of the five great tribunals, and a vast number of mandarins accompany him. Two sides of the field are occupied by the emperor's officers, and guards; the third is allotted for all the labourers of the province, who repair thither to behold their art honoured and practised by the chief of their empire; the fourth is reserved for the mandarins.

THE emperor enters the field alone, lies down, and nine times knocks his head against the ground, in adoration of Tien, the God of heaven; he pronounces, with a loud voice, a prayer appointed by the tribunal of rites, invoking the blessing of the almighty sovereign on his labour, and on the labour of his people, who form his family; he then, in quality of sovereign pontiff of the empire, sacrifices a bullock, which he offers up to heaven, as the origin of all happiness: whilst they cut the victim in pieces, and place them on the altar, they bring to the emperor a plough, in which are yoked a pair of bullocks, magnificently adorned. The emperor then, laying aside his royal robes, takes hold of the handle of the plough, and turns up several furrows the whole length of the field; then, with a complaisant air,

having delivered the plough to the mandarins, they successively follow his example, emulating one another in performing this honourable labour with the greatest dexterity. The ceremony ends with distributing money, and pieces of stuff, among the labourers there present; the most active of whom finish the remaining labour, before the emperor, with great nimbleness and address.

SOME time after, when they have sufficiently laboured and manured their lands, the emperor repairs again, in procession, and begins the sowing of the fields, always accompanied with ceremony, and attended by the labourers of the province.

THE same ceremonies are performed, on the same days, in all the provin-

ces of the empire, by the viceroys, assisted by all the magistrates of their departments, in presence of a large number of the labourers of their respective provinces. I have seen this opening of the grounds at Canton, and never remember to have observed any of the ceremonies invented by men, with half the delight and content with which I beheld this.

THE ENCOURAGEMENTS OF AGRICULTURE.

THE Chinese agriculture has likewise other encouragements. Every year the viceroys of the provinces send the names of such labourers as have particularly distinguished themselves in their employments, either by cultivating

grounds, which had till that time been looked upon as barren, or, by a superior culture, improving the production of such lands as formerly had bore grain, to court. These names are presented to the emperor, who confers on them honourable titles, to distinguish them above their fellow-labourers. If any man has made an useful discovery, which may influence the improvement of agriculture, or should he, in any manner, deserve more distinguished marks of respect than the rest, the emperor invites him to Peking, defraying his journey, with dignity, at the expence of the empire; he receives him into his palace, questions him with respect to his abilities, his age, how many children he has, the extent and quality of his lands; then dismisses him to his plough, distinguished by honours

ry titles, and loaded with benefits and favours.

GENTLEMEN, whether is the king who behaves in this manner, or the people who are thus governed, the most happy? Amongst a people where there is no inequality, where every one aspires after distinctions, such encouragements cannot fail to inspire a love for labour, and an emulation for the cultivation of the land.

THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT'S
ATTENTION TO AGRICULTURE.

MOST part of the attention of the Chinese government is directed towards agriculture. The chief object of the father of a family ought to be the sub-

sistence of his children. The state of the fields, in consequence, forms the great object of the toils, the cares, and the solitudes of the magistrates. It may easily be imagined, that, with such dispositions, the government has not neglected to secure to the labourers that liberty, property, and indulgence which are the great springs for the improvement of agriculture.

THE Chinese quietly enjoy their private possessions, as well as those which, by their nature, cannot be divided, but belong to all, such as the sea, the rivers, the canals, the fish which they contain, and the beasts of the forest: navigation, fishing, and the chase, are free to all; and he who purchases a field, or receives it by inheritance from his ancestors, is consequently the lord and master of it.

THE lands are as free as the people; no feudal services, and no fines of alienation; none of those men interested in the misfortunes of the public; none of those farmers who never amass more exorbitant fortunes, than when an unfavourable season has destroyed the country, and reduced the poor labourer to die for hunger, after having laboured the whole year to maintain his fellow subjects; none of that destructive profession, brought forth in the delirium of the feudal system, under whose auspices thousands of processes arise, which drag the labourer from his plough into the dark and perilous mazes of chicane, and thereby rob him, while protecting his rights, of that time which would have been usefully employed in the general service of the human race.

THE IMPOSTS ESTABLISHED IN
CHINA INVARIABLE.

THERE are no other lord, no other superior in China, who has power to levy taxes, but the emperor, who is the common father of the family. The bonzes, who are priests of the sect of Fo-hi, accustomed to receive alms from a charitable nation, would be very poorly received, should they pretend that this alms is a right which has been bestowed upon them by heaven.

THE IMPOST NAMED THE TENTH.

THIS impost, which is not exactly the tenth part of the produce, is regulated according to the nature of the lands: in

poor soils it is perhaps only the thirtieth part, and so in proportion. This impost, however, of the tenth part of the produce of the ground, which belongs to the emperor, is the only tax on the lands, the only tribute known in China since the foundation of the empire; and such is the happy respect which the Chinese have for their old customs, that an emperor of China would never in the least think of enlarging in it, nor his subjects have the least fear of such augmentation. The people pay it, not to avaricious farmers-generals, but to honest magistrates, their proper and natural governors. The amount of this tribute, though seemingly small, must be very large, when we consider that it is levied on every foot of ground of the largest and best cultivated kingdom in the universe. This tax is paid with the great-

est fidelity, as they know to what uses it is applied. They know, that part of it is laid up in large magazines, distributed over all the provinces of the kingdom, and allotted for the support of the magistrates and soldiery: they know, that when there is a scarcity, these magazines are free to all, and the necessities of the people supplied with part of that which was received from them in plentiful times: they know too, that the remainder of this impost is sold in the public markets, and the produce of it carefully carried to the treasury of the kingdom, the custody of which is intrusted to the respectable tribunal of Ho-pou, from whence it never is issued but to supply the family's general necessities.

THE AGRICULTURE OF AFRICA
AND ASIA COMPARED WITH
THAT OF CHINA.

REMEMBER, gentlemen, what I have told you of the laws, the customs, and the manners, of the various nations of Africa and Asia, the state of whose agriculture I have searched into; compare nation with nation, and then judge, if the unhappy Malabar, without property, subjected to the tyrannical government of the Moguls; judge if a race of slaves, under the cruel scepter of the despote of Siam; judge if the Malais, ever turbulent, and fettered by their feudal laws; judge, I say, if these kingdoms, though if they were in possession of the best lands in the universe, can possibly ever make agriculture to flourish like

the Chinese, ruled as a family, and subjected solely to the laws of reason. I shall again therefore confidently say, that, in every country in the world, the fate of agriculture depends solely on the laws there established, on the customs of the people, and even on the prejudices which derive their origin from those laws.

WHAT pains have mankind taken, from one end of the world to the other, to make themselves miserable! Created to live in society, to cultivate the ground, and enjoy from their labour the infinite blessings of the almighty, they had only to listen to nature's voice, who would have taught them happiness below: instead of which, they have strained their faculties in inventing barbarous institutions, and perplexing laws, which being badly a-

dapted to the feelings of men, and discordant with that law which is imprinted on every man's heart, their establishment could only be effected by force, overflowing the world with blood; and which, once established, have continued to lay waste the earth, checking population, by oppressing agriculture.

THE STATE OF AGRICULTURE IN EUROPE.

WHAT an extensive object has an attentive traveller, to remark the state of agriculture amongst the different nations of the world! In Europe behold it at present flourishing, in a country which, during many preceding ages, was obliged to beg subsistence amongst the neighbouring kingdoms, who possessed a hap-

pier climate, and a greater extent of territory. During those times of barbarity, their loss of liberty and right of property brought along with them the destruction of cultivation; nor has she recovered those natural rights of mankind, and established again the foundations of drooping agriculture, but through rivers of blood, and outrages which would shock humanity to behold.

I N A F R I C A.

THE most part of Africa, whose regions the ancients knew, which were looked upon as the granaries of the universe, now present nothing to the view but lands either quite desolated, or miserably cultivated by slaves.

IN AMERICA.

SOUTH America, full of marshes, brambles, and woods, beholds her extensive tracks hardened even by the sweat of her labourers in chains. The northern regions of that quarter of the globe are inhabited by inconsiderable tribes of negroes, wretched, and without culture; yet free, and, in consequence, less miserable perhaps than those kingdoms who pretend to be civilized; but who, being farther removed from the laws of nature, by the privation of those rights which she bestows, make efforts in vain to procure that happiness, which is only to be obtained by a good agriculture.

I N A S I A.

THE extensive continent of Asia offers to your consideration, in one quarter, an immense uncultivated region, inhabited by a band of robbers, more intent on plunder than the cultivation of their lands; in another, a large kingdom, which once flourished, and was excellently laboured, but now is peopled by the unhappy remains of a wretched people, dying of hunger from the neglect of agriculture, and spilling their blood, not for liberty, but for a change of tyrants. This delightful fertile quarter of the universe now beholds her lands enslaved, her labourers in chains, subjected either to the blind despotism

of cruel tyrants, or the destructive yoke of the feudal system.

BUT look towards the eastern part of the Asiatic continent, which is inhabited by the Chinese, and there you will perceive a delightful prospect of the happiness all the human race might enjoy, were the laws of this kingdom the model of those of other nations. This immense domain unites under the shade of agriculture, established on liberty and reason, all the advantages possessed by any people, polished or barbarous. The blessing pronounced on man, when he was created, seems not to have had its full effect, but in favour of this people, who have encreased as the sand on the sea shore.

KINGS, who govern kingdoms ! ar-

biters of their fate! view this well; it is worthy your attention. If you would have plenty to reign in your dominions, if you would favour population, and make your people blessed; observe those multitudes out of number which cover the territories of China, who leave not the least piece of ground uncultivated; it is liberty, it is their unmolested right of property that has established a cultivation so flourishing, under the auspices of which this people have increased as the corn with which their lands are laden.

ARE you ambitious of being the most potent, the wealthiest, and the happiest of princes, look towards Peking, and observe the greatest of men placed on the throne of reason: he commands not, but instructs; his words are not

decrees, but the maxims of justice and wisdom; his people obey him, because equity dictates his commands.

HE is the most puissant of the human race, reigning over the hearts of the largest society in the universe, who are his family. He is the most wealthy of sovereigns, drawing the tenth of those plentiful crops with which an extent of territory six hundred leagues square, cultivated even to the tops of the mountains, are covered: he regards this as the riches of his children, and he carefully preserves it. In short, he is the most blessed of kings, daily tasting the inexpressible delight of making millions happy, and alone enjoying, undivided, that satisfaction which his subjects share, who are all equally dear to him;

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all living like brothers, in liberty and plenty, under his protection.

HE is very benevolent, and is named TIEN, as the real and perfectest likeness of heaven; because he behaves himself like a mortal, his happy children worship him as a Deity.

T H E E N D.



